

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR (Astrakhan Oblast)

SUBJECT Astro-GRES Power Station at Astrakhan

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1. Location: The Astrakhan power station, known as Astro-GRES, is on the banks of the Balda River, a tributary of the Volga, about 1.5 or 2 kilometers from the main railroad station in Astrakhan.*
2. Installations: (See attached map for location of installations.) The power station, already under construction in 1932 and in production before World War II, was dismantled during the German invasion, and the machinery apparently was set up again in Omsk. Beginning in 1945, after the first transport of PWs arrived, the old cement foundations in the boiler house and the turbine building were completely removed, and new foundations for completely different machinery were erected. The substitute mechanical fittings are of English origin. Since 1945 transports of equipment have arrived rather regularly, with the boilers and turbines coming through Murmansk and then overland and usually by way of the Volga to Astrakhan. Equipment for the construction work at the plant included normally two cement mixers, though four mixers were available when the foundation work was at its height. Hand-drawn carts were used to move earth and construction materials, and excavations were made with shovels and hand-barrows. Brought in by ship and railroad, construction materials, particularly cement, were always on hand.
3. By the middle of December 1947, the first boiler and the first turbine were in production. The second boiler, which also serves the first turbine, has been producing since August 1948. Two more boilers of greater capacity, which will be connected with a second turbine, are to be erected. In April 1949, the material was arriving for these two additional boilers, which were to be completed in the summer of 1949. The second turbine is scheduled to be in production by 1950 but, [redacted] probably will not be producing until 1951. The first two boilers and the first turbine are in the east section of the boiler house and the turbine building respectively, while the newer equipment is being erected in the west sections of these buildings.

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4. Connected with the turbine building by a twelve-meter-long covered passageway is the switch house, a 55 x 11 meter, one-story building, already prepared for the setting up of the second turbine. A subterranean power line runs from the switch house to the open air transformers, which are 20 to 25 meters south of the switch house and cover an area 60 x 40 meters. Running from the transformers is a high tension line, which source assumes leads into the city to the small old power station, in whose immediate vicinity is a rather large transformer plant (Uspannwerk), known by the name of Podstaniya.**
5. Other installations at the new Astrakhan power station include a 40 x 6 meter garage, which houses the mechanical workshops where the plant's trucks are repaired; a well equipped fitting shop measuring 40 x 8 meters; and a three-story administration building measuring 16 x 8 meters. A section of the plant yards is used to store parts for the new boilers and turbine but the more sensitive parts, such as valves, measuring instruments, etc. are stored in a small warehouse measuring 30 x 12 meters.
6. The plant's transportation system, which is made up of Russian equipment, is completely mechanized. Required coal supplies are brought in to the plant from the Don Basin (Donbas) by ship and railroad. One branch of the plant's railway spur leads to the coal dump, which holds up to 22,000 tons. Soviet state locomotives are used on the enterprise's railway. Once the plant's dock on the Balda River is completed, most of the coal is to be transported by ship. Two small cranes with a capacity of one ton apiece are used to unload the coal from the boats and the trains. The coal is conveyed from the dock and the coal dump to the bunker by means of cable cars and then from the bunker to the coal mills by means of a conveyor belt system, which also carries the coal dust from the mills to the furnaces. The coal mills, which consist of four parts, are in the boiler house. The cable cars are frequently out of order.
7. Production: While the old power station in the city produces only 6,000 kilowatts per hour, according to Russian specialists, the new power station's turbine I, coupled with the two already assembled boilers, produces 25,000 kilowatts per hour. Before turbine I was put into production, its work was performed by an English electric train (E-Zug), which was moved to Tashkent on 13 March 1948. Turbine II, which source estimates can not be in production until 1951, is supposed to be considerably larger than turbine I. The two high pressure boilers, which are to serve turbine II, are approximately twice as large as the boilers for turbine I, and the coal mills for boilers III and IV are much larger than the mills for boilers I and II. The plant consumes large quantities of coal; already in February 1949, the plant's daily coal consumption had risen to 700 or 800 tons.
8. Management: Every phase of the power plant construction project is centrally directed from Moscow. Visiting commissions, made up of both civilian and military personnel, control the construction work. The commission which visited the plant in early 1949 included the general of the MVD troops in the Astrakhan Oblast and the district administrator from Saratov. The directors in Astrakhan are as follows:
- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| Director of the construction work: | Engineer Artyomshik |
| Deputy: | Engineer Shapanov |
| Director of the power station: | Bolferov |
| Deputy (also in charge of administration of supplies for the construction work): | Pushmin |
9. Personnel: Approximately 250 men worked in the power plant itself, but, particularly in 1945 and 1946, up to 800 or more workers have been employed on the construction work.

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10. Security measures: The guarding of the plant, though performed almost exclusively by women, is carried out very conscientiously. The part of the yards which borders the river and is not fenced in is patrolled by three women during the day, and the guard is strengthened at night. Watchtowers make possible a lighter guard on the other three sides, where there is a fence.

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- * Comment: See for map indicating the location of the power station in relation to other industrial installations in the vicinity.

Two Attachments: 1. Map
2. Key to Map

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- ** Comment: Probably Podstantsiya (Sub-Station)

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